

SENATOR EDWARDS FACT SHEET ON HOMELAND INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

“Asking a law enforcement agency to manage intelligence is like trying to jam a square peg into a round hole.”

-- Senator John Edwards, 12/18/02

In the wake of September 11, it is clear that the FBI has failed as an intelligence collection agency. Americans have realized the need to dramatically improve our ability to identify foreign terrorists operating in America, track them down, infiltrate their cells, learn their plans and stop them cold. In order to ensure the best intelligence that this task demands, Senator Edwards has proposed creation of a homeland intelligence agency that will be responsible for collecting foreign intelligence inside the United States. Rather than try to rework existing agencies into something they aren't meant to be, Edwards' proposal would recognize the need for one agency to focus on intelligence gathering against foreign threats inside the U.S., while establishing guidelines to make sure that Americans' rights are protected.

BETTER INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

- **New Agency Focused Solely on Intelligence Gathering, Not Law Enforcement:** Edwards' proposal recognizes the need for an agency that focuses solely on domestic intelligence. While the FBI is an excellent law-enforcement agency, it is fundamentally unsuited to the task of intelligence gathering. By creating a homeland intelligence agency, we can ensure that this vital task gets the attention it needs.
- **Shifting Intelligence Gathering on Foreign Operatives Working in the U.S. to One Agency:** This proposal will transfer responsibility for collecting intelligence – including learning about the plans, intentions and capabilities of international terrorists operating inside the U.S. -- away from the FBI and into a new intelligence agency, the HIA, under the Department of Homeland Security. Appropriate functions from CIA, NSA and other agencies will also be transferred.
- **Better Coordination with Other Agencies:** The HIA also will have an office responsible for ensuring that there is prompt and efficient coordination between it, the FBI and other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, and appropriate cooperation overseas with the CIA.
- **Working to Ensure Better Accountability:** The HIA will have provisions for rigorous internal auditing, together with enhanced public reporting and congressional oversight, which will provide accountability.

PROTECTING AMERICANS WHILE PROTECTING THEIR RIGHTS

- **Better Protections for Individuals, Groups:** To ensure that the collection of vital intelligence does not infringe on Americans' right to privacy, the HIA legislation improves upon current civil liberties protections by requiring new, strong guidelines for all operations to prevent abuse, including data mining activities. Edwards' proposal also mandates that the government get approval from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court before gathering information about religious and political groups.
- **Protecting the Rights of Americans By Overseeing New Guidelines:** The HIA will have an Office of Privacy and Civil Liberties Protection, headed by a Director appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. With the help of an independent Citizens Advisory Board, this office will be responsible for developing and overseeing new guidelines to help the agency get the best intelligence while also protecting the rights of every American.